

# HRD for Youth Empowerment



Eight innovative approaches submitted for the  
1999 ESCAP HRD Award



United Nations  
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific



Australian Agency for International Development

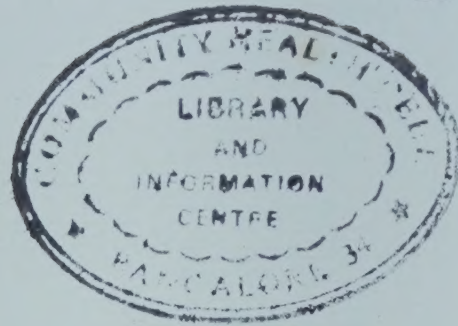


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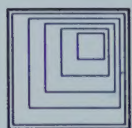
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# HRD for Youth Empowerment



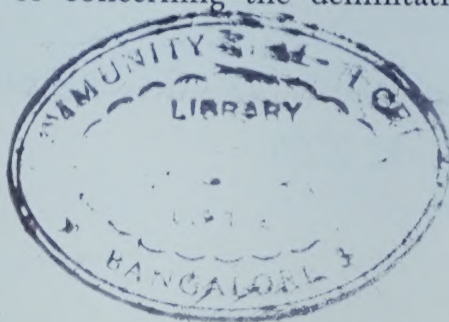
Eight innovative approaches submitted  
for the 1999 ESCAP HRD Award



United Nations

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific  
New York, 2000

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# Preface

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) confers the ESCAP Human Resources Development Award annually in recognition of exceptional contributions made in the area of human resources development (HRD). Established in 1990, the Award distinguishes innovative and sustainable approaches to HRD in Asia and the Pacific, in response to the call made by the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP region.

Adopted by the ESCAP Commission in 1988 and revised in 1994, the Plan regards people as the principal means, as well as the end, of development processes. Their well-being should thus be the central goal of such efforts. The Plan consists of three interdependent components: investment in human resources to enhance productive capacities; utilization of those human resources to produce increased output; and participation of human beings in the consumption of the benefits arising out of that increased output through an enhanced quality of life.

Each year, the ESCAP HRD Award has adopted a different theme in line with the Plan. In 1990, the first ESCAP HRD Award was presented to the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development for its achievements in the area of HRD and the environment. The 1992 Award was bestowed upon Dr Wan Wenpeng, Professor of Psychiatry and Honorary Director of the Yunnan Mental Hospital for his exemplary work in HRD and drug demand reduction.

The 1994 Award with the theme, HRD for Women in Extreme Poverty, was awarded to the Dhaka Ahsania Mission of Bangladesh. In 1995, the Barefoot College of Tilonia Village,



Rajasthan, India, won the Award for promotion of HRD in the area of productive employment for youth.

The Sungi Development Foundation of Pakistan received the 1996 Award for its contribution to people's participation for community development. In 1997, the Award with the theme, Empowering the Urban Poor was presented to the Human Development Centre (HDC) of Thailand. In 1998, the Department of Non-formal Education (DNFE), Ministry of Education, Thailand received the ESCAP HRD Award for its exemplary work in the field of adult education.

This year's Award, the 1999 ESCAP HRD Award for Youth Empowerment, was conferred upon the All-China Youth Federation, China, in recognition of its wide range of HRD activities for youth and the impact of these activities on young people at both the national and local levels.

The criteria for selection of the 1999 Award winner included the following: degree of HRD commitment; responsiveness to the needs of the target group; innovativeness of the approach; impact; and sustainability of the activity.

The ESCAP Secretariat received 83 nominations and applications for the 1999 ESCAP HRD Award from both individuals and organizations in 24 countries. In addition to the winner, an international jury selected as runner-up Micronesia Bound, Federated States of Micronesia. The jury also conferred honourable mention upon the following: Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, India; National Youth Achievement Award Council, Singapore; and Tayo Ang Tinig At Gabay, the Philippines.

This publication contains case studies of the Award winner, the runner-up and the three honourable mentions, as well as three other shortlisted nominees: Wan Smolbag Theatre, Vanuatu; Research Centre for Policy and Development, Thailand; and Khmer Youth Development Organization (KYDO), Cambodia.

The Secretariat hopes that the innovative approaches adopted by these eight organizations in their work for the empowerment of young people will inspire and assist others throughout the region.

The Secretariat wishes to extend its gratitude to the Government of Australia for sponsoring the 1999 ESCAP HRD Award and for providing the funds for this publication.



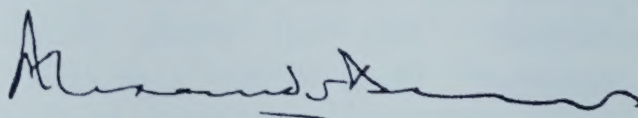
# Message from the Donor Government: Australia

Youth are the building blocks of tomorrow's society and our most important asset for the future. At an estimated 20 per cent of the population of the Asia-Pacific region, young people aged between 15 and 24 years represent a vast human resources potential. But our young people also face considerable challenges. These include high rates of unemployment, limited access to education and vocational training, risk of HIV/AIDS infection, the potential of social marginalisation, and drug and alcohol dependency. If the societies of the Asia-Pacific are to realise the full potential of our young people, we must understand these challenges. We must also foster an environment in which youth are empowered to effectively meet and overcome these challenges.

The theme of the 1999 ESCAP Human Resources Development Award is "Youth Empowerment". Youth empowerment is based on the belief that young people themselves are the best resource for promoting their own development. Empowering young people means creating and supporting conditions under which young people can contribute to the economic, social and cultural advancement of their societies and gain self-fulfilment. Within the human resources development (HRD) context, enabling conditions for youth empowerment includes ensuring

access to education, information and skills, health and other social services, and employment opportunities. The 1999 ESCAP HRD Award recognises and encourages exemplary work by Governments, the private sector and civil society organisations to strengthen the capacities of our young people and to facilitate their contribution to the economic and social development of our region.

This publication honours the work of the eight shortlisted candidates for the 1999 ESCAP HRD Award. Their innovative and inspiring work in the field of HRD for youth empowerment is published here in order to share the lessons they have learnt, to stimulate discussion on HRD and youth issues, and to encourage further activity in this field. As the following pages demonstrate, government agencies, non-government organisations and individuals in the region are undertaking new and exciting work in the area of human resources development for youth empowerment. We commend them for their hard work, dedication and continued inspiration.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Alexander Downer', with a long, flowing horizontal line extending to the right.

ALEXANDER DOWNER

*Minister for Foreign Affairs*

June 2000



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*HE Mr Bayin Chaolu, President of All-China Youth Federation, China (centre), winner of the 1999 ESCAP HRD Award, is seen during the Award-presentation ceremony with Mr Adrianus Mooy, Executive Secretary of ESCAP (3rd from the left), Mr Paul Tighe, Minister and Permanent Representative of Australia to ESCAP (3rd from the right), Ms Kayoko Mizuta, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP (right), HE Mr James Bule, Minister of Trade, Vanuatu (second from the right), the Vice-Chairman of the 56th session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (2nd from the left) and Mr Hasudungan Tampubolon, Director, Social Development Division of ESCAP (left).*



# Introduction

The theme for the 1999 ESCAP HRD Award was Human Resources Development for Youth Empowerment. Empowerment of young people refers to creating and supporting conditions under which young people can contribute to the economic, social and cultural advancement of their societies and gain self-fulfilment. This includes education, knowledge, information and skills, access to health and other social services, and employment opportunities.

Youth, according to the United Nations definition, is the age group between 15 and 24 years old, which represents approximately one-fifth of the total population of the ESCAP region. The sheer size of the young population highlights the importance, as well as necessity, of integrating young people fully into society. This can only be done through the empowerment of young people, and in particular, through their participation in society.

Youth Empowerment is predicated on three key issues: access and benefit, ability to influence and equity. Young people must be allowed to, and encouraged to, participate in the decision-making processes, which affect their lives.



Not only is this their right, but also it will encourage young people to become more responsible citizens. Youth empowerment is thus a key to human resources development (HRD) for the Asia-Pacific region.

This publication records the innovative approaches adopted by eight organizations in the region, which have implemented programmes that empower young people. These are the All-China Youth Federation, China; Micronesia Bound, Federated States of Micronesia; Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, India; National Youth Achievement Award Council, Singapore; Tayo Ang Tinig At Gabay, the Philippines; Wan Smolbag Theatre, Vanuatu; Research Centre for Policy and Development, Thailand; and Khmer Youth Development Organization (KYDO), Cambodia.

The best practices included in this book cover a wide range of approaches, institutional structures, target groups, resource bases, economic and social conditions, and priorities. The programmes range from large-scale youth organizations to small, community-based initiatives. The eight case studies together comprise a diverse group of both traditional and modern approaches, small and large organizations, and both governmental and non-governmental projects. The target groups include youth from both rural and urban areas, as well both mainstream and marginalized groups. The case studies also represent a variety of countries within the Asia-Pacific region, with three from South-East Asia, two from the Greater Mekong Subregion, one from South Asia, and two from the Pacific subregion. Due to this diversity, each organization provides a model for youth empowerment programmes that is both innovative and unique.

Each of the eight case studies is organized into six sections. The first section provides an overview of the organization and any relevant economic and social context, its goals and its approach. The second section focuses on the organization's programme goals and main activities for youth empowerment. The responsiveness of the organization is then reviewed in the





third section. The fourth section evaluates the impact of the organization, in terms of its achievements as well as its efforts to ensure youth participation in its programmes. General conclusions about the organization are then drawn in the fifth section. The final section looks at what lessons can be learned from the organization, which will be useful to other organizations in the region.



*Young people participate in ACYF's vocational training programme.*



# All-China Youth Federation (ACYF)

## *China*

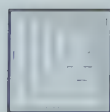
WINNER OF THE 1999 ESCAP HRD AWARD

**Address:** No. 10 Qianmen Dondajie  
Beijing 100051, China  
**Telephone:** +86 (10) 8521-2163  
**Fax:** +86 (10) 6701-8131  
**E-mail:** acyf@public2.bta.net.cn

## A. BACKGROUND

China, with a population of 1.2 billion spread over 9.6 million square kilometres, is the most populous and one of the most diverse countries in the world. Youth, defined in China as aged 14 to 35, is comprised of 300 million people, approximately one quarter of the population. Although most Chinese youth receive at least nine years of compulsory education, the task of preparing this enormous group of young people to play an active role in society remains a daunting one. Youth issues in China today are particularly complex given the rapid societal changes that accompany the country's move towards a market-oriented economy.

The All-China Youth Federation (ACYF), formerly the All-China Federation of Democratic Youth, was incepted during a national congress in Beijing on 4 May 1949, the eve of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Over the last five decades, the ACYF has matured along with China,



and now operates as a non-governmental organization (NGO) responsible for coordinating youth activities throughout the country. The Federation comprises 46 different youth organizations, including the Communist Youth League of China, the All-China Students' Federation, the Chinese Young Men's Christian Association, the Chinese Young Entrepreneurs Association, and 34 local youth organizations throughout China. This organizational structure provides ACYF contact with close to 350 million Chinese youth.

### 1. Goal

The ACYF has been entrusted by the Chinese government with the responsibility of overseeing youth development activities throughout China. Accordingly, the ACYF is committed to the promotion of youth development and youth empowerment throughout the country.

### 2. Approach

ACYF's philosophy is that youth are an important force in China's social progress and modernization process. Youth empowerment is thus one of the important starting points of their work. The ACYF strives to attain its objective through several vehicles: guiding youth participation in reforms and national construction, creating favourable conditions for the growth of young people in all fields, ensuring the protection of youth rights, promoting unity among youth of different ethnic and religious groups, and encouraging exchange and cooperation with youth from other countries.

## B. PROGRAMMES

### 1. Goals

Through training and education, ACYF's programmes are aimed towards empowering youth and helping improve their capacity to develop self-sufficiency, as well as to participate in every aspect of national development amid China's changing society.





## 2. Activities

The ACYF pursues its goals through an extensive variety of programmes that are administered either directly by ACYF or indirectly through its member youth organizations.

### *Newspapers and magazines*

The ACYF publishes a daily newspaper distributed to youth throughout the country as well as a regular magazine dealing specifically with youth issues. Both publications help to bring Chinese youth together and keep them informed on important issues of particular significance to them. The organization also publishes a quarterly English-language newsletter, which informs youth and other interested people in the rest of the world about ACYF activities.

### *Training programmes*

#### *a. Vocational*

The ACYF conducts a wide variety of vocational training programmes for youth. As China undergoes rapid economic reform, many youth find themselves without employment, making vocational training increasingly important. The transition to a more market-oriented economy entails an increasingly competitive job market; thus, in order to attain self-sufficiency, youth must have marketable skills and entrepreneurial ability. To help meet these needs, ACYF has initiated training programmes in every province to help improve youth skills in their current jobs as well as to help unemployed youth become more marketable. The organization also provides technical training in middle schools, colleges and more advanced scientific and technological educational facilities. The Chinese Youth Entrepreneurship Action helps unemployed youth improve their skills and find new jobs. In the agricultural sector, ACYF supports grassroots efforts to improve the scientific knowledge of farmers to help them increase farm productivity.



### *b. Project Hope*

In addition to its own training programmes, ACYF supports the formal education system. Through its Project Hope, it has raised funds to improve educational facilities and set up new primary schools. Thus, Project Hope has also been instrumental in assisting millions of youth to resume their formal schooling.

### *c. Leadership*

Leadership training is also a major component of ACYF's mission. It conducts workshops and seminars on management and leadership while encouraging youth to assume leadership roles, both within ACYF and elsewhere.

### *Training for rural migrants to cities*

As the market increasingly dominates the economy, among the most significant changes in Chinese society is rapid urbanization. Unable to make an adequate living from farming and attracted by robust economies of the cities, many rural youth migrate to urban centres; however, the migrants are often ill-prepared to sustain themselves once they arrive at their destination. Thus, ACYF has initiated vocational skills training programme specifically aimed at these migrants.

### *Youth rights*

As the largest youth organization in China, ACYF is one of the strongest advocates for youth rights. It has organized many youth workshops to educate them about their rights as guaranteed by the constitution. The organization has also played an active role in promoting youth interests in Beijing as well as – through local youth federations – in provincial governments throughout the country.

### *Environmental Protection*

Rapid economic growth tends to render detrimental consequences on the environment; however, ACYF is working to alleviate these effects in China. An example of a successful national programme is the Mother River Protection Operation





which works to protect the Yellow and Yangtse Rivers. At the local and provincial levels as well, respective individual youth federations have been active in a range of environmental protection activities.

### *Chinese Young Volunteers Association*

One of ACYF's most innovative member organizations is the Chinese Young Volunteers Association (CYVA). Established in 1994, CYVA coordinates exchange programmes between urban and rural communities, sending educated urban youth to spend six months to two years in poverty-stricken rural areas. The youth volunteers work as teachers in rural villages, helping to bridge the widening rural-urban gap in educational levels. In one village, a volunteer physics teacher helped raise the passing rate of national examination in her village from 25 to 75 per cent in just one year. Another volunteer taught new fruit farming techniques in the same village, leading to drastic increases in yield. In CYVA's first year, 22 volunteers travelled to Shanxi Province. Subsequently, the programme has grown rapidly: in the last five years, CYVA has placed 3,000 volunteers in 150 different project sites throughout China.

### *International exchange*

The ACYF has an extensive international exchange programme. It maintains exchange programmes with government youth groups, political party youth organizations, and non-governmental youth groups in more than 100 countries around the world. ACYF members benefit from these relationships by travelling to foreign countries every year to exchange views on youth policy formulation and regional youth initiatives; in addition, they also learn about science and technology, management, environmental protection, and social and economic development.

## **C. RESPONSIVENESS**

Youth, of whom there are hundreds of millions in China, are the main target of ACYF's programmes. ACYF is in constant contact with youth through its local and provincial organizations that implement the bulk of ACYF's activities. Through

this decentralized structure, responsiveness is ensured as the organization is able to ascertain and respond to the felt needs of Chinese youth.

The ACYF believes that youth are the key to China's future and, as such, it is crucial for ACYF to assist youth in developing their full potential. The organization thus strives to ensure that their programmes are appealing to, as well as influential among the young people.

#### D. IMPACT

The ACYF provides training and education to those who need them most. These types of skills-development and entrepreneurship programmes implemented by ACYF have reached thousands of young people in both urban and remote rural areas. ACYF has also been instrumental in founding at least 7,500 schools, which have assisted ~2.2 million youth resume their schooling.

Furthermore, ACYF works to instil in young people a sense of social responsibility to benefit other youth in China as well as in the rest of the world. More than 70 million volunteers have worked for ACYF programmes as teachers, doctors and social workers. Through their holistic concept of self-protection, the organization teaches young people to protect themselves, both physically and mentally. This type of knowledge, coupled with the youth rights campaigns by ACYF, imparts in young people the awareness and self-confidence necessary for their future. The organization has thus been instrumental in ensuring that young people learn the skills necessary to support themselves in China's changing society.

#### *Youth Participation Indicators*

The ACYF and its affiliated federations have a total of approximately 350 million members nationwide, reaching virtually every youth in China. Programmes are open to all youth, guaranteeing a high degree of *access to benefit*. ACYF provides Chinese youth with *ability to influence* its internal policies





through inclusion of youth in the governing structure at provincial and national levels. It also serves as a conduit through which youth can influence provincial and national policy decisions. ACYF's programmes are largely aimed at improving the life choices of youth who are least able to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the new economic system, thus ensuring greater *equity* in the Chinese society at large.

The ACYF has had an enormous impact, reaching far beyond its 350 million members and touching the lives of young people in every province of China. Over the past 50 years, ACYF has implemented activities and led campaigns, which have transformed the lives of many Chinese youth and enabled them to have a successful future.

## E. CONCLUSIONS

ACYF has helped to make youth a driving force in Chinese politics and society since its founding, adapting to the changing needs of Chinese youth as China undergoes a period of socio-economic transition. Its current activities are primarily focused on ensuring that young people, regardless of social or economic background, are able to obtain their share of benefits presented by China's rapid economic development. ACYF also strives to impart in Chinese youth a sense of civic duty in both national and international arenas.

## F. LESSONS LEARNED

ACYF's success and its sustainability can be primarily attributed to two factors:

- As a national federation, rather than a centralized organization, ACYF builds on the strengths of its member federations, especially at local and provincial levels. This allows a huge organization – with a membership larger than most countries' populations – to maintain contact with, and serve the needs of, individual youth members throughout the country.



- Flexibility has been a key to ACYF's sustainability. As an integral part of Chinese society since the founding of the People's Republic of China, ACYF has continued to play an important role for both the youth and the country through times of great social, political and economic transition. Its willingness to alter its strategies and even its goals to adapt to the socio-economic changes taking place in China has been crucial to ACYF's success and impact on youth development.



*Young people learn self-protection skills.*



# Micronesia Bound II

## *Federated States of Micronesia*

RUNNER-UP FOR THE 1999 ESCAP HRD AWARD

**Country:** Federated States of Micronesia  
**Address:** P.O. Box 326  
Medical Office Campus  
Kolonia, Pohnpei 96941  
Federated States of Micronesia  
**Telephone:** +691 320-2365  
**Fax:** +691 320-4896  
**E-mail:** AramasKapw@mail.fm

### A. BACKGROUND

Micronesia Bound, runner-up for the 1999 ESCAP HRD Award, combines conventional vocational training with education in the traditional ways of the island people of Micronesia to help out-of-school and unemployed youth and substance abusers become more productive members of society. A large part of this innovative programme's success is due to the fact that it simultaneously teaches youth to make a living and increase their self-esteem by inculcating an appreciation of their traditional culture and livelihood.

Micronesia Bound is located in Pohnpei State, in the Federated States of Micronesia (which also includes Yap, Kosrae and Truk). Pohnpei State has a population of approximately 35,000 and is made up of 630 island and atolls, the largest of which is Pohnpei Island.

Pohnpei, like most of the other Pacific islands, is in the midst of a transition from an agrarian subsistence economy to a



modern market system. Traditionally reliant on farming and fishing, Pohnpeians are becoming increasingly dependent on the market. This economic transformation has rendered enormous social change, including a breakdown in the traditional communal structure of society. Micronesian families are becoming increasingly nuclear, and communities are less involved than they had been in youth development and mentorship.

Micronesian youth are among the hardest-hit in this transition. Youth, along with children, constitute over half of the population. They suffer disproportionately from high unemployment and are increasingly alienated from the community as a whole. The breakdown of communal ties makes it especially difficult for youth who are unable to support themselves in the modern economy.

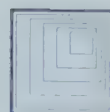
Moreover, a large number of Micronesian youth are not reached by the present education system. Elementary school is compulsory, so most children attend school through Grade 8. Subsequently, however, only 40 per cent of students pass the entrance exam for secondary school. Even among those who are accepted to secondary school, many drop out before they complete their schooling. The literacy rate in Micronesia is thus among the lowest in the world. This lack of education is especially problematic, given the shift in economic and social structures. With the economy increasingly dependent on business and commerce, education has become an important prerequisite for employment.

The twin problems of high unemployment and low literacy, combined with rapid social changes and increased commercialization, have contributed to an increasing incidence of substance abuse among the youth of Micronesia. Micronesia Bound was founded in 1976 in response to this problem, targeting unemployed and out-of-school youth who are either substance abusers or are at risk of becoming one.

### 1. Goal

Micronesia Bound's main goal is to help reintegrate troubled youth into their local communities through education and vocational training, with a special emphasis on traditional culture. Programmes focus on helping youth to develop survival, self-esteem, and citizenship skills.





## 2. Approach

Micronesia Bound has been active in youth development for more than two decades. It began with the vision of one individual devoted to promoting human resources development and the Pohnpei youth. Micronesia Bound's first two pilot courses were conducted with no outside funding. Subsequently, it became evident that the programme was helping the participants: for example, there was a decrease in delinquency on the island. This decrease led the Department of Mental Health of the former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (which then governed the island) and the Pohnpei State Legislature to begin funding Micronesia Bound.

The organization has received extensive praise for its work. It collaborates with the United States Peace Corps in its grass-roots development activities and has grown substantially, reaching thousands of youth. It now employs a staff of eight, including one Peace Corps volunteer, and has a board of directors made up of prominent community members. Micronesia Bound remains the only programme on Pohnpei designed to directly address the needs of troubled and out-of-school youth.



*Mr Churchill Edward, Executive Director, Micronesia Bound (left) and Mr Paul Tighe, Minister and Permanent Representative of Australia to ESCAP (right).*

## B. PROGRAMMES

### *Aramas Kapw*

#### 1. Goals

Micronesia Bound's largest and most successful programme is Aramas Kapw, which means "new person". The goals of the programme are rehabilitating youth substance abusers, preventing juvenile delinquency, and encouraging youth to complete school. Aramas Kapw is based on a philosophy that prevention of crime, drug abuse, and unwanted pregnancy depends on positive self-image and adult role models. These are provided by giving youth the opportunity to experience life as their ancestors lived. Micronesia Bound operates from a belief that returning to traditional values and practices will help to improve the self-esteem of youth participants, providing them with the strength necessary to become productive members of their communities. At the same time, the Aramas Kapw programme imparts important vocational skills and stresses the importance of formal education in the modern economy. Recognizing the diversity of its students, Micronesia Bound stresses flexibility in its approach to teaching and training.

#### 2. Target Group

Micronesia Bound targets youth with histories of drug abuse. Its mandate is to serve youth who have been identified by the Department of Justice as "at-risk" but the programme is open to any young person between the ages of 13 and 21. There is no cost to the participants, the only requirement is that they pass a physical fitness test and be available for the 22-day duration of the course.

#### 3. Activities

The heart of Aramas Kapw is a 22-day course on traditional Pohnpeian culture and livelihood. Each Aramas Kapw course is divided into four phases. *Phase One* consists of orientation and an awareness-raising programme, wherein participants meet with local officials and educators and receive education on health, nutrition and prevention of STDs, including HIV/AIDS.





They also learn about substance abuse issues and are exposed to counselling opportunities.

As an island nation, the ocean is a major part of traditional Pohnpeian culture; thus, *Phase Two* entails an ocean expedition. Aramas Kapw participants travel together around the island and to neighbouring islands by canoe, camping in different places each night. During this phase, participants visit important historical sites and learn more about their traditional culture. They learn to navigate using traditional methods and travel in traditional canoes while fishing and gathering food as their ancestors had done. They also take part in community service through the construction of sea walls. The ocean expedition helps to promote cooperation and build trust among the participants, while strengthening their self-esteem and knowledge of their traditions.

*Phase Three* is a mountain expedition to the highest point on the island of Pohnpei. During the first part of the expedition, participants learn about the flora and fauna of the island and to survive using only the materials and food available there. Each participant then goes on a solo hike for three days, which helps build confidence and allows opportunity for personal reflection and growth.

*Phase Four* consists of hiking and rappelling. The physical challenge of this phase gives the participants a sense of achievement and confidence, while helping them see how much they have learned over the three weeks of the course.

While the focus of Aramas Kapw is to encourage youth to resume their education, Micronesia Bound staff are also aware that not all participants want to return to school. Skills-building is therefore of paramount importance in the programme. Throughout the programme, Micronesia Bound stresses the importance of self-sufficiency. At the same time, there is also an emphasis on the community. The goal is to impart traditional skills that will help Aramas Kapw graduates to not only support themselves, but also to contribute to their families and communities.

Since Micronesia Bound's target group is, by definition, difficult to reach, the staff work diligently to develop lasting relationships with both the students and the parents. This facilitates recruiting for future courses while ensuring that graduates

continue to benefit from their participation in the programme. Follow-up is a key element of Aramas Kapw. Although the course itself is only 22 days, instructors work to establish long-term relationships with participants.

Follow-up begins with job placement assistance. Through partnerships with the Job Training Partnership Act and the Talent Search Program, Micronesia Bound provides opportunities for its graduates that they would not otherwise have. There are also formal follow-up programmes every six months for two years after the course.

### *Other activities*

In addition to the 22-day programmes, Micronesia Bound also organizes shorter mini-camps aimed at youth who are still in school. These “mini-camps” generally last one week, and emphasize the same ideals as the longer programmes but in a less intensive manner.

## C. RESPONSIVENESS

Aramas Kapw instructors are perhaps the most important element of the programme. Instructors are alumni of the programme, so they have a personal understanding of the issues facing Pohnpeian youth. Furthermore, it is easier for the instructors to build trust and establish rapport with the youth participants for they share a common background. It also guarantees a high degree of responsiveness to the needs of the target youth.

Responsiveness is also ensured through formal evaluations of Aramas Kapw. At the completion of each course, participants complete a survey evaluating their experience during the course. There are also periodic programme evaluations, including follow-up surveys of former participants to gauge the long-term impact of the programme.

## D. IMPACT

### *Youth Participation Indicators*

Micronesia Bound ensures its programmes’ *access to benefit* by remaining open to all interested young people. Although mandated to serve “at-risk” youth as designated by the state,





anyone can participate in Aramas Kapw. Youth *ability to influence* is ensured through the structure of the programmes. In addition to conducting regular evaluations, which include surveys of participants and alumni, the programme also draws its trainers from among Aramas Kapw graduates. Finally, *equity* is an overwhelming concern of the organization, as it was created specifically to address the needs of the most disadvantaged of Pohnpeian youth.

As noted above, Micronesia Bound has a formal evaluation system including questionnaires completed by participants and longer-term studies of graduates of the programme. These evaluations have shown that the programme has remarkable success in getting participants integrated back into mainstream society and leading productive lives.

Of 521 participants in the program from 1995 to 1999, 43 per cent returned to school, obtained a graduate equivalency diploma, or pursued vocational training. Another 15 per cent secured full-time employment after taking part in the programme, while virtually all alumni returned to their communities.

According to Micronesia Bound, “students have learned to appreciate what is rightfully theirs and to recognize the true value of cooperation”. Participation in the programme has changed the attitude its graduates have towards their fellow citizens and their role in the community. In addition to graduates, families and communities the benefit from the training Aramas Kapw participants receive. Every time a course is completed, the graduates become a part of the solution, and no longer the problem.

## E. CONCLUSIONS

Micronesia Bound has proven to be remarkably sustainable, steadily increasing its programmes and its impact on the community over the course of its 30-years existence. It owes this success to a variety of factors, most notably commitment to its mission and flexibility in responding to



the needs of the community. Most important, Micronesia Bound has continuously provided a needed service to Pohnpeian youth. It has imparted to them skills, knowledge and confidence they need to succeed in a changing world, while instilling in them the importance of working for their communities.

## F. LESSONS LEARNED

Micronesia Bound illustrates several principles that can be used by other organizations to replicate its success in youth empowerment:

- Appreciation for, and incorporation of, traditional culture is central to Micronesia Bound's philosophy and a key to its success. The rapid modernization and westernization of many developing countries often leaves youth with nothing to fall back on. Teaching youth about their own traditional culture gives them pride in themselves – which helps build confidence – as well as concrete skills that have been used for generations to establish a livelihood in their communities and environment.
- Inclusion of youth in the planning, implementation and monitoring stages is crucial to the success of the projects. Micronesia Bound depends on graduates of its programme to work as trainers in future courses. This guarantees that the implementers of the programme have understanding of the issues facing the participants. At the same time, Micronesia Bound conducts frequent evaluations, consulting current and past participants to ensure that its programmes are meeting their needs.
- Micronesia Bound incorporates environmental issues into all of its programming. Many of the problems faced by the poor in developing countries are intricately related to the destruction of the natural environment they live in. Thus, it is crucial to foster an appreciation for the environment beginning at an early age.



# Nehru Yuva Kendra III Sangathan (NYKS)

## *India*

HONOURABLE MENTION FOR THE 1999  
ESCAP HRD AWARD

**Address:** East Plaza  
Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium  
New Delhi – 110 002, India  
**Telephone:** +91 (11) 337-9703  
**Fax:** +91 (11) 337-9886  
**E-mail:** nyks@giasd101.vsnl.net.in

### A. BACKGROUND

The physical size of India, its vast population, and the amazing diversity of its peoples make comparisons between India's institutions and other countries' almost impossible. Such is certainly the case with Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), India's largest youth organization.

NYKS is the national coordinating organization overseeing 200,000 village-level youth groups devoted to grassroots development of rural youth. An independent agency under the Ministry of Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports, NYKS primarily serves out-of-school youth in rural areas. Its 8 million members in nearly every district of India take part in an enormous variety of activities in education and training, enterprise creation, thrift and cooperation, health, family welfare, HIV/AIDS prevention, poverty alleviation, drug abuse prevention, environmental protection, literacy, and women's empowerment.

## 1. Goal

NYKS is committed to grassroots development of rural youth and their incorporation into the mainstream Indian society.

## 2. Approach

NYKS pursues its goals in a decentralized manner through support for village youth organizations. The village-level groups, in turn, carry out a wide range of activities open to both their members and to local youth at large.

## B. PROGRAMMES

### 1. Goals

NYKS's programmes are aimed at improving the situation of rural youth, particularly those who are out-of-school, and helping develop their capacity to become active participants in society and responsible productive citizens.

### 2. Activities

As local youth clubs take advantage of the decentralized structure of NYKS to initiate a huge variety of youth activities every year, it is difficult to provide a comprehensive overview of the activities directly or indirectly conducted by an organization as extensive as NYKS. However, the following are examples of activities that NYKS relies upon to help achieve its objectives:

#### *Training and education*

NYKS has organized many training programmes for youth. Over 156,000 young people have taken part in leadership training programmes which offer them skills necessary to assume responsibility for village issues and work towards social, economic and cultural development in their communities. In addition to local training workshops, a select group of young people were invited to participate in regional-level intensive leadership training programmes. NYKS also organized training workshops throughout India on issues such as child rights, science and technology, natural resource management, and development.





Vocational training is also an important part of NYKS's mission. The main targets of NYKS's activities are youth with minimal or no education who are often unable to support themselves. Local NYKS chapters organized 11,578 programmes over the last four years, providing 366,852 youth with vocational training to help improve their productivity and earning capacity in their current occupations or to begin new ones.

### *Youth Club organization*

NYKS pursues a strategy of encouraging youth to address their own problems whenever possible. To that end, the national organization supports the growth of local youth clubs and organizes leadership training workshops to instruct local leaders on managing and operating their local chapters. It also provides financial support to local youth groups and has helped initiate regional resource centres, where clusters of ten village clubs can pool their resources to provide information and resources to a larger population. NYKS has also offered many awards recognizing outstanding growth and achievements by local youth clubs.



*Rehabilitation work being done by youth club members in the Erasama block in Orissa after the cyclone disaster.*



Local clubs are also encouraged to assume an active role in local political issues. NYKS supports awareness-generation campaigns, which generally last about five days, on problems of particular local significance; approximately 3 million youth have participated in such activities. NYKS has also cooperated with the Department of Women and Child Development to implement a nationwide project on women's empowerment.

### *Public service*

NYKS encourages and supports its members to take part in a wide variety of voluntary public service activities in their communities. Over 200,000 youth have participated in five-day work camps, helping their communities with individual projects such as building or repairing schools, roads, and other public infrastructure. The camps also give the youth groups an opportunity to spend intensive time together, discussing social and development issues among themselves. For young people interested in longer-term community service, NYKS coordinates the National Service Volunteers Scheme, in which volunteers work for one or two years in community welfare and development activities.

Other community service activities include several innovative projects: the creation of old-age day-care centres, providing physical, emotional, psychological, and economic support to elderly community members; assistance to disabled people in the fitting of aids and appliances; and the annual Youth Action Against Poverty Awards, recognizing outstanding work by young people in poverty alleviation.

### *Recreation and culture*

NYKS organizes many cultural programmes with the objective of promoting and encouraging local folk art, which convey important social messages. Programmes include theatre, dance, music, puppetry and other indigenous art forms.

In order to encourage community building and good sportsmanship among rural youth, NYKS sponsors many sporting events. The chosen types of sports require minimal infrastructure, equipment and financing, and local groups participate in village and district level sporting tournaments.





### *Health programmes*

In a country as poor as India, maintaining the health of the population is an enormous task. Thus, NYKS collaborates with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on a project named Health Awareness Units, which educates the rural populace on various health issues, including reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention. The programme is primarily staffed by youth volunteers who take the Units to villages throughout the country. Moreover, NYKS has also worked with UNICEF on an educational campaign to teach rural youth about overpopulation, malnutrition, illiteracy, health and sanitation, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and prevention, pregnancy and childcare, nutrition and other health issues.

NYKS has initiated several programmes specifically aimed at stemming the HIV/AIDS epidemic, including a project called Villagers Talk AIDS with support from the World Bank, and an awareness-raising campaign in the northeastern states, the poorest region of the country. To commemorate World Population Day, NYKS and UNFPA organized a workshop on adolescent reproductive health and gender sensitization. Finally, local youth clubs have organized blood donation drives in many villages to address the shortage crisis in the national blood supply.

### **C. RESPONSIVENESS**

NYKS's sole target group is youth defined as 15 to 35 years of age. In order to confront youth problems such as unemployment, illiteracy, poor reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and drug abuse, NYKS recognizes that there is a need for active involvement of trained, guided, and motivated rural youth in programmes addressing social and economic development. Responsiveness is ensured by the decentralized structure of NYKS, which relies on local youth organizations to initiate and conduct relevant activities, allowing youth participants an active role in the planning, implementation and evaluation of all NYKS programmes.



## D. IMPACT

### *Youth Participation Indicators*

NYKS has done a remarkable job of ensuring *access to benefit* for an enormous number of people throughout India. NYKS encompasses 200,000 village-level groups and over 8 million individual members in every state of the country. The decentralized structure of the organization helps to guarantee *ability to influence* at both local and national levels. Additionally, the local groups are run by rural out-of-school youth who are the very beneficiaries of NYKS's programmes. This gives them the opportunity to be a part of the decision-making process of a major national organization as well as standing in their own communities to participate in local policy-making. Furthermore, *equity* is a key component of the NYKS mission, which aims to reach uneducated young people in rural villages who are among the most disenfranchised people in the country.

NYKS has had an enormous impact, reaching far beyond its 8 million members to provide important services to rural young people in every state of India. Over the last four years, NYKS has provided direct benefit to 43 million rural youth through its programmes.

More than 350,000 young people have taken part in NYKS vocational training activities, learning important skills which has enabled them to earn a living and provide for themselves. At the same time, 156,000 youth have been trained in local leadership programmes. This has allowed previously unorganized youth to gain status, recognition and respect in the communities, enabling them to work for positive social change.

Local youth clubs have had even broader reach, involving millions of young people in a variety of activities. At the same time, regional youth development programmes have reached a further 36,656 youth in remote areas. More than half a million people have taken part in NYKS's cultural programmes, while 1.2 million have participated in its sporting events.





NYKS's programmes reach even beyond its youth members. Through its work camps and other volunteer activities, young people have been instrumental in providing important services to rural villages all over the country. Over the past four years period, nearly 250,000 youth took part in 3,152 work camps, while 3 million participated in awareness-raising campaigns on social and economic issues. NYKS's Health Awareness Units have attracted 80,000 volunteers, reaching over 10 million people with health education through nearly 100,000 programmes.

HIV/AIDS prevention is another area in which NYKS has reached beyond its membership. More than 1,500 youth volunteers have been trained to blanket the northeastern states with information on HIV/AIDS prevention, while nationwide, as many as 4.3 million youth leaders are taking part in the Villagers Talk AIDS programme. Moreover, nearly all government ministries have initiated collaborative projects with NYKS or its local affiliates, further enhancing the organization's impact on youth development.

## E. CONCLUSIONS

NYKS is a potent force for youth empowerment in India. Since its inception in the early 1970s, it has grown from a relatively small programme to a national movement, giving youth a voice in governing the country. Its sustainability is ensured by the continuing support of the government and also by the structure of the organization, which has created self-sustaining organizations at the local level throughout the country. Local youth club leaders, as a result of their involvement in NYKS activities, often become community leaders working for community welfare and development.

## F. LESSONS LEARNED

Although the enormous number of people reached by NYKS is unique to organizations in very large countries like India, it nonetheless serves as an exemplary case to be emulated by other national youth organizations striving to improve youth welfare while simultaneously increasing youth participation in community decision-making processes.



- Even though it is a national organization in a country of more than 1 billion people, NYKS has maintained its grassroots character through a decentralized model of governance. Each of the village youth clubs is autonomous, with the national organization providing financial and technical support and serving as a catalyst for new programmes. This guarantees that youth participants in the local clubs are able to independently manage their programmes and attain status and authority in their own communities.
- NYKS has remained flexible and open in its decision-making and planning processes; thus it has continued to play an active and influential role in youth development for over 25 years.



*Rehabilitation work being done in Orissa after the cyclone disaster by youth of Andhra Pradesh who were mobilized by NYKS.*



# Tayo Ang Tinig At IV Gabay (TATAG)

## *Philippines*

HONOURABLE MENTION FOR THE 1999  
ESCAP HRD AWARD

**Address:** 29-B Elicano Street  
East Bajac – Bajac  
Olongapo City 2200  
Philippines  
**Telephone:** +63 (47) 222-3289  
+63 (47) 223-5131  
**Fax:** +63 (47) 222-4711

### A. BACKGROUND

For most of the 1970s and 1980s, the Philippines lagged behind many countries in South-East Asia in economic growth and development. The economy began to rebound in the 1990s, but the effects of the 1997 Asian financial crisis considerably deteriorated the economy, and poverty and unemployment once again swept across the Philippines.

Olongapo is one of the poorest cities in the Philippines. As the former site of the largest US overseas military base, the city's economy had been almost entirely dependent on providing services for the military servicemen, including bars and prostitution. Thus, when the US military withdrew its base from Olongapo in 1992, the city became deprived of its main economic base. As in many other places, the burden of poverty in Olongapo falls disproportionately on children and

youth, many of whom are forced to eke out a meagre living in the city streets. One group in Olongapo, however, is helping these children and youth to rise above poverty and empowering them to participate as full members of their community.

Tayo Ang Tinig At Gabay (TATAG) was founded in 1994 as the result of a merger among several existing street children and youth organizations. Today, the organization is run entirely by local youth who have lived and worked in the streets. The group conducts extensive street education programmes and provides badly-needed social services to Olongapo children and youth.

### 1. Goal

TATAG aims to develop child and youth capacity to obtain their fundamental rights as guaranteed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A major goal of TATAG is enabling children and youth to become involved in the policy-making process, both locally and nationally.

### 2. Approach

TATAG bases its work on a philosophy of including youth at all levels of the decision-making and implementation process. In their own words, "the strength of this approach rides on the collectivism and ownership principle because the stakeholders feel and believe that they belong to an organization that gives paramount importance to participation as a yardstick for its success. Young people participate in the process of defining their collective dreams and aspirations in life as individuals and as members of the community. This is an approach that seeks to empower young people to gain control of their own situation. Participants go through a process wherein their orientation and understanding of development are not confined to the parameters of economic growth more importantly include human and social development".





## B. PROGRAMMES

### 1. Goals

With an overall objective of guaranteeing young Filipinos the rights set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, TATAG's specific goals include improving the quality of life in poor urban communities, particularly for women and children; organizing communities; helping poor urban youth to network and collaborate with the private sector, government, and NGOs; and supporting the development of knowledge, positive attitudes, and skills.

### 2. Activities

TATAG's activities include training, organizing, and providing social services such as health care.

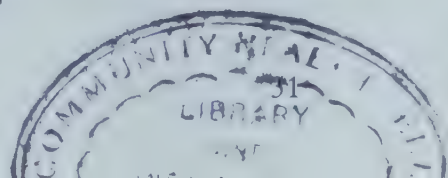
#### *Training*

TATAG's extensive street education programme focuses on leadership training for youth. This programme targets older street children with the goal of organizing and maximizing their involvement in youth activities. The training programme is divided into three phases:



*Leadership training can use various artistic medium. One way to maintain the attention and interest of children and youth is through the audio-visual breakthroughs of information technology.*

DEVELOPMENT





- *Caring phase*

In the “caring” phase, outreach workers, who are mostly former street youth themselves, identify street children and youth and try to learn and understand the kinds of problems they face. They tend to the immediate needs of the young people, taking them to soup kitchens and public health centres. They also invite them to take part in games and other activities, involving them in the community. The key to this phase is listening to the young people who live in the streets, allowing them to express their thoughts and feelings and demonstrating that the outreach workers care about their well-being.

- *Healing phase*

The second phase is “healing”, in which activities are aimed to allow youth positive experiences that will help them gain confidence and appreciate their own talents and abilities. This phase includes training in simple vocational skills as well as the opportunity to take part in such activities as acting in plays and producing a newsletter. Participants are encouraged to take a more active role in TATAG and the instructors try to identify potential leaders among them.

- *Teaching phase*

Finally, the “teaching” phase provides more extensive training for the youth to become facilitators and trainers themselves. This phase helps the participants to raise their own level of self-awareness and encourages them to look at the systematic issues that lead to problems facing street children and youth. They then work together to determine what they can do collectively to help improve the situation for themselves and for others.

In addition to the street education programme, TATAG also conducts more conventional vocational training for young people to help them make a living and become self-sufficient.





## *Organizing*

TATAG's philosophy is that children and youth are the ideal group to effectively motivate their peers to participate in activities geared toward improving their prospects for advancement. Youth leaders are therefore trained to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to become effective leaders, including facilitation and organization. In addition to these practical leadership skills, participants also take part in activities that help them clarify goals and values as well as to strengthen their commitment to social work.

Young people participate in the process of defining their collective dreams and aspirations as individuals and/or members of their communities. This approach seeks to empower young people to gain control of their own situations.

TATAG's most visible initiative is the creation of the Youth Committee on Children's Rights. The committee brings together representatives from many different formal and informal sector youth groups, including schools, NGOs, civic organizations, street-based organizations, and poor urban communities. Each year, the Youth Committee convenes a Children and Youth Congress, a large gathering of youth and children which discusses important issues affecting their lives. The annual congress produces a list of resolutions, which is presented to local and national governments, including the Senate and the President. Thus far, the congress has helped to establish local playgrounds and vocational training programmes throughout the city.

## *Health care and social services*

TATAG provides medical and dental care to poor urban youth and their families in Olongapo, and refers people with significant medical problems to local clinics and doctors. It also operates counselling programmes and administers a variety of recreational and cultural programmes for street children and youth and their families.



### C. RESPONSIVENESS

Monitoring is carried out regularly, and children and youth are consulted on a monthly basis to determine whether TATAG's programmes are meeting their needs. Evaluation is conducted after every activity, and the youth leaders conduct formal evaluations of the entire programme annually. Furthermore, as young people are in charge of all project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, the projects naturally follow their needs.

### D. IMPACT

#### *Youth Participation Indicators*

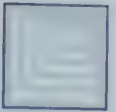
Participation is the central focus of TATAG's programmes. One of its main objectives is to achieve active participation of youth in the democratic process and community development, as the poor and young people are often excluded from real participation in policy-making. TATAG has made great strides to remedy this situation in Olongapo.

TATAG ensures *access to benefit* for a wide range of young people in Olongapo by conducting extensive outreach programmes throughout the city, encouraging the participation of as many youth as possible. *Equity* is guaranteed by the fact that TATAG's programmes are offered free of charge to anyone who wants to participate.

*Ability to influence* is the hallmark of TATAG's approach. Young people are not only involved in the programmes, but they also control every stage of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Programme planning is based on objectives determined mainly through extensive focus group discussions among street children and youth. Implementation is almost entirely by youth themselves. Youth participants in TATAG's programmes are constantly trained and groomed to become facilitators and leaders.

Although it is a relatively young organization, TATAG has had a substantial impact both locally and nationally. During its first five years of existence, TATAG successfully trained 20 young people to become youth facilitators or organizers and





another 30 to become community organizers. These youth work in Olongapo helping poor urban communities, especially the youth, to safeguard their rights.

Throughout Olongapo, TATAG has had a major impact in the community. It has helped communities to organize themselves and address pressing community problems. With the help of TATAG, government agencies and NGOs have begun to coordinate their delivery of services to poor urban communities and developed a common set of indicators to measure their success.

Working with children and youth, TATAG has helped street children to reintegrate into their communities, enrol in formal education, and develop concrete plans for their futures. At the same time, out-of-school youth have received training in vocational skills, enabling them to secure work in the formal sector and to start up their own small businesses. Finally, TATAG has made medical and dental care accessible for the poor of Olongapo and provided needed social services to youth and their families.

Numerous Philippine and international organizations have recognized TATAG's success. Youth leaders from TATAG took part in the Global Youth Summit in San Francisco in 1996 and the Millennium Youth Congress in Hawaii in 1999. TATAG youth leaders and the executive director were also invited to share their experiences at regional conferences on youth participation and development around Asia. UNICEF also chose TATAG as a representative to the International Meeting on Youth Participation in preparation for the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1998.

## **E. CONCLUSIONS**

Within a short period, TATAG has made remarkable progress. The organization serves as an innovative model for genuine youth participation in community development and organization. Although it is perhaps premature to judge TATAG's long-term sustainability, the organization's policy of grooming the beneficiaries of its projects to take on leadership roles is a good way to ensure that the organization will carry on.



## F. LESSONS LEARNED

TATAG has proven to be successful in guaranteeing the rights of children and youth, providing badly-needed social services and delivering important technical and vocational training to a wide variety of people in Olongapo. Its reach, however, extends to the rest of the Philippines. It provides several examples of how other organizations can work to improve youth empowerment in their own communities.

- Genuine participation is a hallmark of TATAG and a major reason for its success. Young people are not only clients, but they are also actively involved in every stage of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all of TATAG's activities.
- To ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the communities it serves, TATAG conducts in-depth evaluations of all its programming. The evaluations go beyond surveys and questionnaires, bringing community members together for focus group discussions in order to elicit extensive feedback on TATAG's work.



*Young people making posters for child rights.*



# National Youth V Achievement Award Council (NYAA) *Singapore*

HONOURABLE MENTION FOR THE 1999  
ESCAP HRD AWARD

Address: 20 Kramat Lane  
#04-12 United House  
Singapore 228773  
Telephone: +65 733-6753  
Fax: +65 733-6754  
E-mail: [nyaac@singnet.com.sg](mailto:nyaac@singnet.com.sg)  
Web site: [www.nyaa.org](http://www.nyaa.org)

## A. BACKGROUND

The National Youth Achievement Award (NYAA) Council was founded in 1992 by then President Wee Kim Wee. NYAA strives to encourage youth development through involving youth in a wide variety of community services, including environmental and educational activities.

NYAA's mission is to "develop and maximize the potential of young people through selfless community service, challenges of adventure, skills development, and physical recreation so that they may become exceptional individuals who can contribute effectively to society and the nation".



## 1. Goal

NYAA aims to develop the human resources of young people, aged between 14 and 25, and to encourage them to achieve their full potential as individuals and citizens.

## 2. Approach

To help obtain its objectives, NYAA relies on a unique blend of corporate partnerships and incentives to nurture and encourage youth development in Singapore. NYAA believes that young people must be given every opportunity to develop their full potential, and be provided with the necessary life skills in order to seize future opportunities and meet challenges.

## B. PROGRAMMES

### 1. Goals

NYAA's programmes are devoted towards helping youth attain their full potential and develop qualities such as self-reliance, perseverance and responsibility.

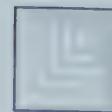
### 2. Activities

The programme invites youth to participate in a wide variety of activities and work toward three different levels of award achievement. By completing a set number of activities in each of the four categories community-service, expeditions or explorations, skills-development, and physical recreation participants earn gold, silver, or bronze awards from the NYAA.

#### *Community service*

NYAA's community service projects are predicated on a belief that young people need to know how they fit into the community at large, as well as how they relate to other young people, in order for them see their place in society. Understanding these relationships then leads young people to want to help others in the community.





Community service includes helping preserve the natural environment through activities such as beach-cleaning, leadership training for students, and overseas community aid projects. For example, two youth groups recently travelled to China, where they taught English classes, participated in nature conservation activities, and helped to repair schools. NYAA participants have also worked on initiatives such as staging a cultural festival for needy senior citizens and service projects in Sri Lanka and Thailand.

### *Expeditions/Explorations*

NYAA's outdoor activities are intended to provide young people with a sense of adventure, as well as to motivate them to push their boundaries and reach new goals. Physically challenging activities can thus be beneficial in proving to young people that they can meet personal goals and overcome challenges.

One of NYAA's expeditions entailed a joint trip with Indonesian students to the Tukangbesi Archipelago in Sulawesi, Indonesia. This expedition gave participants the opportunity to appreciate up-close a relatively unspoiled natural environment while challenging them physically as well as mentally.

### *Skills development*

NYAA has sponsored a variety of training programmes, including a workshop on creative thinking and problem-solving at Nan Tang Technological University and young entrepreneurship programmes in cooperation with the Singapore Trade Development Board. These and other skills-development activities have helped develop the intellectual capacity of Singapore's youth, offering them important skills not always covered in the formal school system.

### *Physical recreation*

Recognizing the connection between physical fitness and mental ability, NYAA has made physical activities an integral part of its programme. NYAA cooperates with dozens of corporate sponsors to offer as wide a variety of activities as possible to



youth participants. These corporate partnerships ensure sustainability for the programme without outside financial assistance, while allowing youth and business people an opportunity to learn from each other.

### C. RESPONSIVENESS

NYAA activities focus exclusively on youth and involve thousands of youth every year. There are a wide variety of activities in each aforementioned category, allowing youth to choose activities that appeal to them. Moreover, frequent meetings and workshops allow youth participants many opportunities for input into NYAA programming.

By providing youth with the opportunity to gain life-skills and achieve personal goals, NYAA is providing young people with the self-confidence and a character-building necessary in today's society in order for young people to meet future challenges and goals. In this regard, NYAA is responding to each young person at the individual level.



*Youth participate in an environmental protection and nature conservation programme.*





## D. IMPACT

### *Youth Participation Indicators*

NYAA ensures wide *access to benefit* through its outreach in schools and by keeping its programmes open to any interested youth. *Ability to influence* is encouraged through NYAA's leadership training programmes, which teach young people how to make their voices heard in the public sphere. NYAA places enormous importance on *equity*, charging only a nominal fee for participation in activities so that youth from poor backgrounds can also participate. It also places strong emphasis on providing accessibility to people with disabilities, ensuring that physical disabilities will not inhibit anyone from participating in NYAA activities or earning awards.

More than 60,000 youth participate in NYAA activities each year. The NYAA has received numerous international and domestic awards recognizing its role in fostering youth development and its innovative methods of involving young people in community service.

Youth participants in NYAA are overwhelmingly positive about their experiences. One participant credits NYAA with exposing her to environmental work and giving her the confidence to achieve a great deal of success in school and elsewhere; another claimed that the enormous improvement in his grades and gaining entrance to university were direct results of his involvement in NYAA.

## E. CONCLUSIONS

Although it is a relatively new organization, NYAA has grown rapidly and has become an established part of life among Singaporean youth within a short period. It has been successful in involving a large number of young people in community service and environmental projects, serving as a vehicle for promotion of interest in public service among a new generation raised in an increasingly market-dominated society.



*NYAA youth community work in Inner Mongolia.*

## F. LESSONS LEARNED

NYAA provides several lessons for other youth development organizations.

- Sustainability is ensured by extensive partnerships with both government agencies and private businesses. While many organizations maintain limited relationships with the public and private sector, NYAA works with a wide variety of partners, ensuring that the programme will continue even if some of the partnerships should end.
- NYAA attracts a large number of youth participants by offering a wide variety of different activities for them to participate in. Each year, hundreds of different programmes are offered; thus youth will find a range of projects that interest them.



# Wan Smolbag Theatre

VI

## *Vanuatu*

SHORTLISTED CANDIDATE FOR THE 1999  
ESCAP HRD AWARD

Address: P.O. Box 1024  
Port Vila, Vanuatu  
Telephone: +678 27 119/24 397  
Fax: +678 25 308  
E-mail: [smolbag@vanuatu.com.vu](mailto:smolbag@vanuatu.com.vu)

### A. BACKGROUND

Vanuatu's 200,000 people are spread over 83 islands and speak more than 100 different languages. Although over 90 per cent of the people understand Bislama, the *lingua franca* of the Pacific islands, many do not speak it well, making communication among people from different parts of the country difficult. The importance of formal education in an economy based primarily on subsistence agriculture is unclear to many, so few attend school beyond the primary level; thus, Vanuatu's adult literacy rate, at about 35 per cent, is among the lowest in the world. The cultural and linguistic diversity and low level of education, combined with the difficulty of inter-island travel due to poorly developed infrastructure, present enormous challenges to human resources development. One group, however, has pioneered innovative ways to meet these challenges by using theatre to engage people, especially youth, in discussion about development issues that affect their lives.



Founded in 1989, Wan Smolbag Theatre began with 15 voluntary part-time actors. It now employs 11 full-time actors (most of them young people), a director, a scriptwriter, a research officer, an office supervisor, and a finance manager. The group is divided into two troupes – one performing primarily in English and the other mostly in Bislama – which travel throughout Vanuatu and to other Pacific island nations.

## 1. Goal

Wan Smolbag Theatre's aim is to increase awareness, promote dialogue, and help empower communities in the areas of health (especially sexual and reproductive), good governance, human rights, and sustainable environmental practices.

## 2. Approach

Wan Smolbag Theatre uses song, dance and storytelling to educate its audiences in an innovative and entertaining way. Wan Smolbag's flexible approach to human resources development targets the disadvantaged with plays, workshops, videos, radio work, training and a youth drop-in centre. While youth are not the exclusive focus of Wan Smolbag's activities, they are the major target and many of the issues addressed by Wan Smolbag, notably sexual and reproductive health, are of particular interest to youth. Although theatre is by its nature a one-way medium, Wan Smolbag emphasizes the importance of reciprocal communication, holding discussions with the audience after every performance, conducting extensive evaluations of its programmes, and working closely with communities on long-term projects.

## B. PROGRAMMES

### 1. Goals

Through "theatre for development", Wan Smolbag aims to promote development of human resources in the country and to empower communities by raising awareness and stimulating discussions on a range of issues relating to social development.





## 2. Activities

### *Theatre productions*

Wan Smolbag's core programme is the production of live theatre presentations that generally last about 20 to 50 minutes and address major issues facing the people of Vanuatu. The most common themes of the play are sexual and reproductive health, democracy and governance, human rights, and environmental preservation. Wan Smolbag's actors conceive most of their story ideas themselves, but they also respond to requests for new plays on specific topics. The group employs a full-time scriptwriter and a director to create the plays, which average about two weeks to write.

After every performance, the group holds community discussions, allowing the audience to raise questions and clarify the messages of the plays. These discussions are an integral part of Wan Smolbag's strategy, giving the actors the opportunity to hear from the communities in which they perform. Wan Smolbag's performances often stimulate long and spirited discussions on issues that are often not addressed in such an open forum. The plays thus serve as a catalyst for more open dialogue among community members on sensitive and important topics.



*A theatre production of Wan Smolbag.*



Many of Wan Smolbag's plays deal with sexual and reproductive health, delivering information on contraception and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS. The group performs these plays in schools and village public settings. They perform in primary as well as secondary schools, since Vanuatu's low secondary school enrolment rate renders it difficult to reach a wide youth audience beyond the primary school level. After the performances, Wan Smolbag divides the audience into male and female groups to facilitate discussion. The actors have all received training in sexual and reproductive health issues, enabling them to lead discussions that often last for hours and answer detailed questions in a non-threatening environment. For many audience members, this is the only opportunity to learn about and discuss such issues.

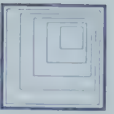
### *Short productions*

In addition to full-length productions, Wan Smolbag produces many shorter plays for specific events as well. Some organizations, for example, commission Wan Smolbag's plays for conference openings or anniversaries. Wan Smolbag has become adept at quickly producing 10-minute opening specials, which only takes a few days to conceive and rehearse. The group has produced these specials for numerous organizations and events, including UNICEF, the Government of Vanuatu, and the Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference.

Wan Smolbag recently produced two short pieces for use in nationwide campaigns. The first was a campaign against dengue fever, which involved visits to as many houses as possible warning of the dangers of dengue fever and pointing out potential breeding sites for mosquitoes. The message was delivered through chorus and song and drew very positive responses; many people collected trash as suggested by the play after the group left.

The second campaign was for the Electoral Commission. When a snap election was called in Vanuatu for early March 1998, it was clear that the Commission would be unable to reach a wide range of people to inform them about their voting





rights prior to the election. At the end of January 1998, the Commission requested Wan Smolbag to produce a play on election procedures and voting rights in preparation for the polls. In order to reach as many villages in Vanuatu as possible within a limited period, actors from all the groups associated with Wan Smolbag participated. Seven troupes, each with five actors from different islands, performed the play in 90 per cent of Vanuatu's villages.

As the plays were very short, the actors had time to discuss electoral issues with the audience after each performance; notably, the villagers reported many cases of bribery and coercion. Many villagers related that they had not planned to vote prior to watching the plays, but subsequently changed their minds as they heeded the importance of voting in the message of the actors. During the month leading up to the election, Wan Smolbag also produced a number of radio spots on voting rights and filmed the play for national television.

### *Community theatre*

In 1997, Wan Smolbag initiated a long-term project with the Blacksands community on the outskirts of Port Vila, Vanuatu's capital city. Blacksands is a poor urban settlement with no water or electricity, where most children do not attend school and many youth are unemployed. The goal of the project was to build stronger ties with the community, where Wan Smolbag had already been working for several years, and learn first-hand about the issues facing Blacksands residents by producing a play in cooperation with the community.

The first meeting drew as many as 100 people, and over 80 of them attended each of the subsequent workshops held in Blacksands over a period of six months. Participants ranged in age from 10 to 60 years, with the majority young people between the ages of 14 to 21 years. With Wan Smolbag's help, the community produced a play about the problems facing Blacksands and similar settlement communities, including the role of the village chief, problems between men and



women, crime, and unemployment. They performed the two-hour play 30 times around Port Vila and the surrounding area.

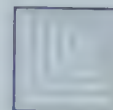
Young people who took part in the community theatre project reported that it was an overwhelmingly positive experience, improving their self-respect. Many of the participants continued their involvement with Wan Smolbag, taking part in films and short-term campaigns after the completion of the play. Working with the Blacksands community on this project allowed Wan Smolbag actors to gain the trust of young community members and to talk to them individually about their problems and needs. The most notable result of this communication was the establishment of the Kam Pussem Hed Youth Drop-in Centre in response to community demand (*see next page*).

### *Affiliated theatre groups*

Wan Smolbag trains and supports several other theatre groups. The Health Force Theatre was founded in 1995 by a group of unemployed youth from the Blacksands community with the help of Wan Smolbag. They are now based at Wan Smolbag's office and perform health-themed plays, particularly dealing with STDs and HIV/AIDS. Wan Smolbag Kids is a group of children and youth actors, aged 12 to 17, who perform mostly in primary schools in Port Vila. They have become very popular, performing plays on dental hygiene and reproductive health as well as collaborating with the other Wan Smolbag groups on projects such as the dengue fever campaign.

Wan Smolbag has also inspired the creation of regional theatre for development groups on Vanuatu's outer islands. The Haulua Theatre Group works on the island of Pentecost, and the Whuran Theatre Group performs on the island of Ambryn. Wan Smolbag provided initial training for all of these groups and continues to support and collaborate with them. In addition to helping set up these full-time theatre groups, Wan Smolbag offers theatre training to community groups, NGOs and theatre companies throughout the Pacific. The group also makes its library of over 40 scripts available to any group that wish to perform the plays.





### *Radio, television and videos*

Wan Smolbag is committed to live theatre as the best way to reach people. However, especially given the difficulties of travelling in an island nation, it is impossible to reach everyone. Therefore, the group also broadcasts plays on television and radio, and it has thus far produced nine videocassettes along with several music cassettes and books. There are television sets and video players in most villages, so the availability of videos makes it easier for Wan Smolbag's work to reach a wider audience. The plays have been broadcast on television in nearly every country in the Pacific, and many people watch the videos multiple times. Wan Smolbag videos are the only major video dramas on developing issues affecting communities throughout the Pacific that feature Pacific islanders, and all videos come with educational user-guides for use in formal or non-formal settings.

### C. RESPONSIVENESS

Although the results of programming such as Wan Smolbag's are difficult to gauge, the organization recognizes the importance of evaluating its impact in order to continue to improve its services. To that end, Wan Smolbag employs a full-time community researcher, who conducts detailed surveys of people's knowledge of the issues addressed, before and after seeing Wan Smolbag performances. The researcher also conducts long-term studies, visiting communities several months after Wan Smolbag performances to measure long-term effects on the level of knowledge and understanding, as well as changes in attitudes and behaviour.

Furthermore, Wan Smolbag has also taken significant steps to respond to communal needs and demands. For instance, one need voiced by the people of Blacksands was for increased sexual and reproductive health information and services. Wan Smolbag's response was to create the Kam Pussem Hed Youth Drop-in Centre in Port Vila. This Centre combines a community centre with a reproductive health clinic where



youth can go for information, counselling, or recreation. It is a safe and comfortable place where young people can watch videos, chat, and receive counselling on sexual and reproductive health issues. The clinic provides free treatment for STDs (including HIV/AIDS), access to contraceptives, prenatal checks, and hospital referrals. The centre has an outreach component, sending nurses and peer educators or counsellors to settlement communities in and around Port Vila. Kam Pussem Hed is the first centre of its kind in the region, and one of the few youth centres in the Pacific serving reproductive health needs. During its first year of operation, attendance at the centre grew from under 20 to more than 200 visitors per month.

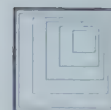
#### D. IMPACT

##### *Youth Participation Indicators*

Wan Smolbag helps to ensure that Vanuatu's youth have *ability to influence* by drawing them into community discussions held after performances. This gives youth the opportunity to engage in discussion with the whole community concerning issues on which they might not be consulted otherwise. *Access to benefit* is a core tenet of Wan Smolbag's philosophy and the reason they travel throughout the island nation to visit as many remote villages as possible. *Equity* is also a guiding principle, as all of the programmes are specifically geared toward the most disadvantaged groups in society.

Evaluations show that Wan Smolbag has made a significant impact. The 1998 voter education project appears to have been very successful. Voter turnout in the election matched or exceeded the 1995 levels, in spite of widespread apathy before the election was called. The electoral office credited Wan Smolbag with much of this success, and several village chiefs reported that many people in their villages were convinced to vote by Wan Smolbag's production. 1998 also saw an increase in citizen reports of fraud, bribery, and other misconduct; many of the reports came forth a result of Wan Smolbag's community outreach work.





Evaluations have also shown a significant increase in knowledge about sexual and reproductive health among youth as a result of Wan Smolbag's work. An extensive study surveyed students at Malapoa College, an elite high school in Port Vila, and in the Blacksands settlement. Students in both places were given a baseline questionnaire immediately before viewing a Wan Smolbag play, testing their knowledge of sexual and reproductive health. The same questionnaire was then administered to the same people two months later. Results in both sites showed a significant increase in understanding and knowledge of the issues, even two months after the play.

An independent evaluation of Wan Smolbag Theatre found "clear evidence that in Vanuatu, [its] activities have led to widespread public and community debate of issues not previously talked about and raised public awareness of issues including voting rights, getting a fair deal from logging agreements and population growth. There is growing evidence that Wan Smolbag Theatre's work in Vanuatu is leading to beneficial change in the areas of sanitation, health, [and] family planning".

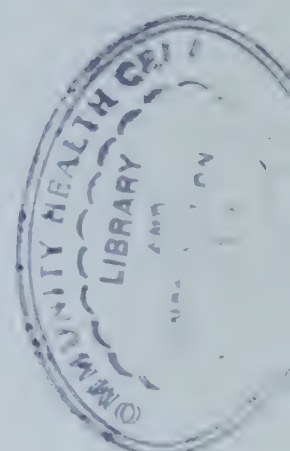
## E. CONCLUSIONS

Wan Smolbag's innovative method of teaching, raising awareness and promoting discussion on youth development issues through theatre is highly effective, particularly in a country with a literacy rate of less than 35 per cent.

## F. LESSONS LEARNED

Some important lessons can be learned from Wan Smolbag's example.

- Much of Wan Smolbag's success is due to the group's ability to *engage* the audience through music, song and dance. People are drawn to performances because they are entertaining, and Wan Smolbag actors adeptly weave important information on health, governance and the environment into the show.





- The actors do not leave at the end of a performance. *Discussions* are an integral part of Wan Smolbag's human resources development strategy. Talking face to face with audience members gives Wan Smolbag the opportunity to clarify its messages and to hear the opinions and experiences of the audience.
- Contact with the community goes beyond post-performance discussions. Structured *evaluations* provide indispensable information on the actual results of Wan Smolbag's work. Long-term community projects, such as the Blacksands community play, give the group an in-depth understanding of their audiences and communities that would otherwise be impossible.
- The group takes *concrete action* in response to community input. This has led, for example, to the founding of the Kam Pussem Hed Youth Drop-in Centre and the creation of the Wan Smolbag Kids theatre group for children and youth.
- The group always remains *flexible*, adapting to changing circumstances and ready to take on new challenges. Thus, they were able to mobilize quickly to produce a play for the 1998 election campaign without sacrificing their long-term plans.



*Young boys at the drop-in centre.*



# Research Centre for VII Policy and Development (RECEPD)

## *Thailand*

SHORTLISTED CANDIDATE FOR THE 1999  
ESCAP HRD AWARD

Address: Faculty of Political Science  
Ramkhamhaeng University  
Bangkok 10240, Thailand  
Telephone: +66 (2) 318-0914  
Fax: +66 (2) 314-1078

### A. BACKGROUND

For most of the 1990s, Thailand was hailed as one of the fastest growing economies in the world and an economic “success story” of South-East Asia. Such economic growth, however, was also accompanied by costs; global trade and industrial growth have rendered disastrous effects on the natural environment throughout Thailand. The extent of traffic congestion and ubiquitous pollution in Bangkok is known throughout much of the world; in the rest of the country, forests have increasingly disappeared, beaches have been defiled, and pollution is sweeping across towns and cities in virtually every region.

Moreover, the benefits of economic growth have been unevenly distributed among the people of Thailand. Indeed, income



distribution in the country has been rated as one of the most inequitable in the world. Despite the increase in overall national wealth, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening, and poverty remains a fundamental problem in urban as well as rural areas, especially in the Northeast.

Founded in 1991, the Research Centre for Policy and Development (RECEPD) is a joint venture between the Faculty of Political Science at Ramkhamhaeng University in Bangkok and MMC Sittiphon Co., Ltd. Its programmes are largely implemented by students from Ramkhamhaeng University and primarily target students from the middle-school to university level.

## 1. Goal

The RECEPD is committed to fostering continued economic development while simultaneously promoting environmental protection and poverty reduction, particularly in Thailand's rural areas.

## 2. Approach

RECEPD's general strategy enables university students to teach their younger peers on topics such as environmental preservation and encourage active participation in local policy-making process. The Centre is committed to the human resources development of youth, not only as an end in itself, but also as a means to promote responsible environmental policies for sustainable development. Many of RECEPD's activities focus on the environment and are specifically geared towards youth; they emphasize the importance of capacity-building and inclusion of youth in the policy-making process. Since training of young students by their elder peers is the essence of RECEPD's programmes, the benefits of the activities extend to both the child learners and the youth trainers. By targeting youth and instructing them on how to render their voices heard, RECEPD has played a crucial role in helping youth empower themselves.





## B. PROGRAMMES

### 1. Goals

RECEPD's stated mission is to provide academic and social services to society in the areas of policy and development. However, its main objectives focus on sustainable development, poverty reduction and youth empowerment through training and educational projects in schools and national parks throughout the country.

### 2. Activities

#### *"Love Mankind, Save the Earth"*

Initiated in 1992, "Love Mankind, Save the Earth" is the largest project administered by RECEPD. In the first phase of the project, RECEPD recruited 400 students from Ramkhamhaeng University and trained them as "change agents". The student volunteers traveled to 45 provinces throughout Thailand, where they taught environmental-awareness courses to 95,000 students in 273 primary and secondary schools. The training courses encourage participation in activities that promote environmental preservation, while focusing on the link between poverty and sustainable development and the effects of environmental degradation on the lives of Thai farmers and other rural residents.

An especially innovative component of the project is support for youth-initiated projects in environmental protection. Each year, RECEPD gives small grants to individual secondary school students to carry out small-scale projects addressing local environmental issues. As of 1999, RECEPD had supported 1,140 such projects. The grants serve a dual purpose: to initiate local projects and to allow young people a chance to have a visible impact on local issues.

#### *Environmental training centres*

In 1996, RECEPD created three Environmental Training Centres, located in national parks. The centres run more intensive environmental training courses for secondary students. Like the school-based programmes, these centres are staffed



primarily by student volunteers from Ramkhamhaeng University. Students who come to the centres are exposed first-hand to the world of nature, gaining direct appreciation for the natural environment.

### *Research and advocacy*

Along with the Environmental Training Centres, RECEPD has also begun a programme to support more in-depth research and advocacy by young people. It has awarded grants to 168 secondary and university students for longer-term research projects related to biodiversity and environmental protection.

### *Model-school competition*

In keeping with the philosophy that environmental issues must be an integral part of education for young people, RECEPD held a competition to choose a “model school”. Almost 300 schools took part in the competition. The winner, Suksa Song Krao School in Mae Hong Son Province, was selected the best school for sustainable development for its system of integrating education, environment, quality of life and self-reliance for its students in the school curriculum. Other schools throughout the country are now emulating this model.



*Learning in the natural classroom.*





## *Training*

Another facet of RECEPD's work is to encourage cooperation between government and civil society on the issues of poverty, improving quality of life, and environment sustainability. Working jointly with the Centre for Promotion of Local Administration at Ramkhamhaeng University, RECEPD has initiated a training programme for young government officials at both local and national levels. Participants learn about local-level policy-making process, community participation, and environmental management. The programme is now being expanded to offer similar training to young NGO workers, particularly in rural areas. The training of young people involved in the policy-making process helps empower youth and promotes public awareness on issues concerning sustainable development and the link between the environment and poverty.

## C. RESPONSIVENESS

RECEPD produces a regular newsletter distributed to its programme participants, which helps motivate and maintain contact with the students beyond the duration of the training courses. Furthermore, it convenes an annual youth assembly, bringing together hundreds of student representatives from every region of Thailand. It also hosted an international seminar on the environment, which attracted students from throughout the region. Participants met and discussed international environmental issues in Bangkok and later travelled to a national park in Thailand.

## D. IMPACT

### *Youth Participation Indicators*

Increasing youth participation in the policy-making process is one of RECEPD's central objectives. *Access to benefit* is assured by the broad reach of the programmes. In Thailand, much of the wealth and power is concentrated in Bangkok, thus RECEPD's activities aim to help remedy this situation by focusing on rural areas. The Centre is active in more than



half of the provinces in every region, and it has achieved significant steps towards inclusion of rural youth in the policy-making process. Most of RECEPD's programmes – particularly the training courses for government and NGO workers – are geared towards increasing youth *ability to influence*. Finally, *equity* is ensured through the overarching emphasis on the link between sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

RECEPD has reached an enormous number of people through its programmes: as many as 95,000 students have taken part in training sessions offered in schools; it has conducted training programmes in 273 schools in 45 provinces in every region of Thailand; and RECEPD has supported 1,140 students to launch individual environmental projects. Additionally, RECEPD has also reached thousands of young people through its Environmental Training Centres in three different national parks; this programme has channelled scholarships to 168 youth for their own environmental research projects. Moreover, RECEPD has provided training to over 400 young people at Ramkhamhaeng University who would later implement its programmes. Not only do these trainers learn about the issues of sustainable development and poverty alleviation, they also gain valuable skills in teaching, presentation and advocacy.

RECEPD has further provided valuable support to the Suksa Song Krao School in Mae Hong Son Province to develop a curriculum that teaches sustainable development. This model is now being emulated in other schools in other parts of the country. Finally, RECEPD's training programmes have equipped young government officials and NGO workers with the knowledge and skills necessary to meaningfully contribute to local and national policy-making processes.

## E. CONCLUSIONS

Although it is a relatively young organization, RECEPD has had a remarkable impact. It has been successful in creating a sustainable organization by creating and maintaining networks among the government, the civil society, as well as the private sector.





RECEPD is unique in explicitly tying environmental issues to poverty alleviation and stressing the inextricable link between the two. Although economic development and environmental preservation are often seen as conflicting goals, RECEPD has helped people understand that fostering a truly sustainable development is the only way to guarantee a vibrant economy in the long run. By focusing on youth, the Centre strives to guarantee that this message will be learned early and become an integral part of the long-term policy-making process.

## F. LESSONS LEARNED

RECEPD serves as an example for other groups and organizations that work to simultaneously empower youth and encourage sustainable development.

- By working with the private sector and involving corporations in the day-to-day functioning of the organization, RECEPD has helped to ensure long-term sustainability. At the same time, links with companies are crucial in delivering the message of sustainable development across to the private sector, which serves as an important vehicle of economic growth and development.
- RECEPD draws on a broad base of volunteers by seeking the participation of university students. This provides the labour force necessary to carry out a large programme, while helping to disseminate RECEPD's message among the people destined to be among the most influential in the future.
- Combining environmental education with youth training on participation in the policy-making process helps ensure that environmental issues remain on the policy agenda. Furthermore, stressing the link between environmental protection and economic development – that is, focusing on *sustainable* development – is a critical component of any development strategy.



*Young people learn about the environment in a national park.*



# Khmer Youth Development Organization (KYDO)

## VIII

### *Cambodia*

SHORTLISTED CANDIDATE FOR THE 1999  
ESCAP HRD AWARD

**Address:** Street 105, corner Street 350  
Sangkat Boeung Keng Kang 3  
Khan Chamcar Mon  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

**Telephone:** +855 (23) 982 851  
+855 (15) 831 211

**Fax:** +855 (23) 216 863

**E-mail:** cidh@worldmail.com.kh

## A. BACKGROUND

After decades of strife, Cambodia is in the process of becoming a peaceful, democratic country with a functioning economy. Unfortunately, that process is severely hindered by low levels of education and training among Cambodian citizens. The Khmer Youth Development Organization (KYDO) is committed to addressing this problem by developing human resources among Cambodian youth and to supporting democracy and human rights in Cambodia.

Since its independence from France in 1954, Cambodia has been mired in larger power struggles, caught between superpowers and often used as a base of operations for combatants in the wars waged in neighbouring Viet Nam. During the Khmer



Rouge reign from 1975 to 1979, the ruling and the educated classes were targeted in a genocide campaign of an enormous magnitude. A third of the Cambodian population perished over a period of four years. When the Vietnamese occupied Cambodia in 1979, hundreds of thousands of survivors fled to refugee camps along the border with Thailand and to other countries. Those who remained in the country suffered from extreme poverty, deprived of support from their families, the state, or the international community.

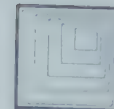
During the 1980s, Cambodia remained isolated from much of the world while the civil war persisted between the Vietnamese-backed government of Cambodia and an uneasy alliance of supporters of the three previous governments. Most of the population lived in refugee camps along the Thai-Cambodian border, and little progress was made inside Cambodia toward economic development.

At the height of the Cold War in 1979, Cambodia was denied Western assistance due to its leadership, which remained in power until 1989. Concurrently, civil strife raged on between national factions. A United Nations-brokered agreement in 1991 tempered the civil conflict, paved the way for the 1993 national elections administered by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), and ended international isolation of the country.

When a peace agreement was signed in 1991, paving the way for Cambodia to open up to the outside, it remained one of the poorest countries in the world, both economically and in human resources. More than 20 years of war had left the economy in a shambles and very few people with any education or training remained in the country. It was in anticipation of this situation that KYDO was founded in 1990 by refugees in the Site 2 camp.

For its first two years, KYDO operated in Site 2, where it carried out education and training programmes for the residents of the camp. In 1992, as refugees were being repatriated in accordance with the 1991 peace treaty, it shifted its headquarters to Phnom Penh, becoming one of the first indigenous NGOs in Cambodia.





## 1. Goal

KYDO's mission is to foster democracy and respect for human rights in Cambodia through capacity-building and human resources development for youth, with particular emphasis on those working for non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

## 2. Approach

KYDO believes that decades of war and civil strife have left the Cambodian people, particularly its youth, in a "moral vacuum". Therefore, it emphasizes moral education in all of its activities while recognizing the burgeoning HIV/AIDS problem in Cambodia and incorporating HIV/AIDS prevention into its programmes.

## B. PROGRAMMES

### 1. Goals

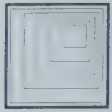
KYDO's specific objectives are to advance human resources development, to support democracy and human rights, and to coordinate with national and international agencies for the development of Cambodia.

### 2. Activities

KYDO aims to achieve its objectives through a variety of programmes grouped into three broad categories: (i) human resources development; (ii) NGO capacity building; and (iii) volunteer activities.

#### *Human resources development*

KYDO provides professional training courses for young people in accounting, marketing, administration and secretarial work, management, English, and computers. Courses generally last six months to one year, four hours a day, and five days a week. They focus on practical training geared towards preparing students for employment.



Although headquartered in Phnom Penh, KYDO conducts training activities throughout the country, with recent courses in Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, and Siem Reap Provinces. While the courses in Phnom Penh focus on skills that are useful for work in offices and businesses, courses in other provinces include agriculture, veterinary medicine and other skills more suited to rural life.

All training courses are open to the public, and are aimed at students who cannot afford to continue their education in the formal system. KYDO charges a fee of approximately USD 15 per course to students who can afford to pay. Otherwise, courses are offered free of charge in keeping with KYDO's goal of providing access to as many people as possible.

As a part of these training activities, KYDO emphasizes employment opportunities. It has developed links to private companies, government agencies, and other NGOs to help place participants in jobs after KYDO training courses. The courses also include tips on job-search techniques.

### *NGO capacity building*

KYDO recognizes that an active and strong civil society is the foundation of a functioning democracy. Although the number of NGOs in Cambodia has increased enormously over the last decade, many of them continue to be run by expatriates and there is a severe lack of capacity on the part of the Cambodian staff. Because of the long civil war and decimation of the educational system, there are very few Cambodians with the skills necessary to run an NGO.

In response to this problem, KYDO conducts special training sessions for capacity-building of NGO staff. It has received extensive support for this programme from the United Nations Development Programme's Partner for Development Programme (UNDP/PDP). KYDO has developed courses in four fields: (i) NGO management; (ii) NGO administration and secretarial work; (iii) NGO accounting; and (iv) NGO community development. Each of the courses is three months long and aimed at developing specific skills necessary to operate a





successful NGO. In addition to teaching the courses, KYDO trainers also developed the course curricula, tailoring them specifically to the Cambodian context.

### *Volunteer activities*

KYDO actively encourages Cambodian youth to take part in volunteer activities to promote development. It is a member of the Network for Voluntary Development in Asia, the Never-ending International Work Camps Exchange, and the Coordinating Committee for International Volunteer Service. Through these associations, KYDO has helped to organize work camps, wherein youth from around the world have come to Cambodia to volunteer with development projects. The projects help to encourage Cambodian youth to take part in community service while giving them the opportunity to interact with youth from other countries.

### *Other activities*

In addition to the core activities above, KYDO is active in many facets of youth development. It operates a library of reference books for students, teachers and the general public. It also conducts research and has published textbooks and manuals on democracy, human rights, NGO management, leadership and community development.

## **C. RESPONSIVENESS**

In order to gauge the effectiveness of its programmes, KYDO regularly conducts surveys on graduates of the training courses on their status of employment and their contribution to the Cambodian society.

In order to confront youth problems such as unemployment and HIV/AIDS and to promote respect for human rights, KYDO acknowledges that there is a need for training programmes which provide young people with the much-needed skills development and information, as well as instilling in them a sense of civic responsibility.



## D. IMPACT

### *Youth Participation Indicators*

By conducting training and education programmes throughout Cambodia on a regular basis, KYDO ensures *access to benefit* on a wide scale. Furthermore, offering its courses free of charge or for a nominal fee ensures *equity*. The NGO capacity building courses are especially aimed at increasing young people's *ability to influence* policy in Cambodia. Particularly because of the weak capacity and widespread corruption in the government, NGOs are an essential component of Cambodia's efforts to reform and develop.

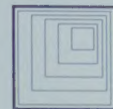
In 1999, KYDO trained more than 800 students, helping many of them become self-sufficient. Surveys conducted by KYDO found that approximately 70 per cent of graduates of the skills-training courses either secure employment in local businesses or support themselves through self-employment.

Over 300 workers from 76 NGOs have participated in KYDO's courses, contributing to improved efficiency and sustainability of Cambodian civil society. Participants in the NGO capacity building courses include directors and managers of many of the most influential NGOs in Cambodia. Accountants, field staff and administrative support staff have also benefited from the courses, taking the skills they learned back to their organizations and contributing to an increasingly strong non-profit sector.

## E. CONCLUSIONS

Although it is only a decade old, KYDO is one of the oldest NGOs in Cambodia. It has successfully made the transition from a small, grassroots group in a refugee camp to a stable, national organization based in the capital. At the same time, KYDO has remained true to its mission of fostering youth development, democracy and human rights. This laudable sustainability is a result of perseverance and flexibility on the part of KYDO's committed staff and directors.





## F. LESSONS LEARNED

KYDO's success provides important lessons for other organizations concerned with youth empowerment in emerging democracies.

- A vibrant non-profit sector with well-trained personnel is crucial to a functioning democracy. Focusing on training of youth working in NGOs therefore provides an efficient method of utilising scarce resources and extracting maximum benefit from education and training programmes.
- HIV/AIDS is a major problem in Cambodia and youth are especially at-risk. It is therefore essential to incorporate education on HIV/AIDS prevention into youth programming, as KYDO does.









